



NEW MEXICO ENERGY, MINERALS and NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Bill Richardson
Governor
Joanna Prukop
Cabinet Secretary

Arthur "Butch" Blazer
Director
Forestry Division

2006-02

SMOKING, FIREWORK, CAMPFIRE AND OPEN FIRE RESTRICTIONS FOR EASTERN, SOUTHWESTERN, CENTRAL AND NORTH CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

Due to abnormally warm temperatures, low humidity, high winds and the abundance of dry, fine fuels, fire danger throughout eastern New Mexico is high. Fire incidents for all wildland fire agencies are increasing daily. Pursuant to New Mexico Statutes Annotated, Section 68-2-16, and other sections of the Forest Conservation Act, NMSA 1978, Section 68-2-1 to 68-2-25, and 19.20.3 NMAC; Restrictions for Fire Prevention, the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division, State Forester, has placed the following restrictions on non-municipal, non-federal and non-tribal lands in Bernalillo, Chaves, Colfax, Curry, DeBaca, Dona Ana, Eddy, Grant, Guadalupe, Harding, Hidalgo, Lea, Lincoln, Luna, Mora, Otero, Quay, Roosevelt, Sandoval, Santa Fe, San Miguel, Sierra, Socorro, Torrance, Union and Valencia counties.

SMOKING, FIREWORK, CAMPFIRE AND OPEN FIRE RESTRICTIONS:

Smoking is restricted to enclosed buildings, within vehicles equipped with ashtrays and on paved or surfaced roads, developed recreation sites or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material.

Fireworks are prohibited in wildland areas. Wildland areas include lands covered wholly or in part in timber, brush, grass, grain or other flammable vegetation. The State Forester is allowing exceptions to the ban on fireworks where they are a part of a public exhibit approved by the local fire department.

Campfires are prohibited unless the following exceptions are met. An exception is granted to the above where cooking or heating devices use kerosene, white gas or propane as a fuel in an improved camping area that is cleared of flammable vegetation for at least 30 feet or has a water source. New Mexico State Parks within the designated areas are included in this prohibition. For information on this contact the local State Park Manager or visit the website at www.nmparks.com.

The State Forester is also allowing exceptions for charcoal grills and wood and coal stoves within yards associated with a residence or on the premises of a business.

Open burning, i.e., burning of cropland, fields, rangeland, debris burning, slash piles, prescribed burning or weed burning, is prohibited. The State Forester grants an exception to open burning when the following conditions are met:

1. The cropland is irrigated. This exception does not apply to non-irrigated croplands, fields or rangelands;
2. Burning is done with adequate planning;
3. Adequate personnel to monitor and control the burn, to assure that it will not become an uncontrolled fire;
4. The burn area is secured from becoming uncontrolled at the end of daily operations; and,
5. At the beginning of each day, before ignition, the person responsible for the burn notifies the local fire department responsible for fire protection and follows all local burning guidelines and 20.2.60.112 NMAC, Conditions for Restricted Open Burning related to state air quality.

Flaring of gas is prohibited. The State Forester grants an exception to open burning when the following conditions are met:

1. At least one adult is on site with communications equipment adequate to reach county dispatch and the local fire department in the event of a fire. The individual should also be equipped with a shovel and a water backpack pump or other equipment to deliver water to suppress a fire.
2. The local fire department and county dispatch are notified at least 24 hours in advance of anticipated releases that will result in flaring. If flaring is done by an automated system then the schedule of flaring shall be provided to the local fire department and county dispatch.
3. Unless the flaring is needed for safety purposes, flaring pursuant to this exception shall not be done on days that are "red flag days" as determined by the National Weather Service or on days when the sustained wind is in excess of 25 miles per hour in the area.

Exemptions

The State Forester may allow exemptions from the above upon receiving a written request and granting subsequent approval in writing. You may apply for an exemption on the Forestry Division website at www.nmforestry.com.

An exemption does not relieve a person from any civil or criminal liability associated with an uncontrolled fire, including costs associated with wildland fire suppression.

These restrictions do not apply to tribal lands; however, the Forestry Division is available to coordinate restrictions with any tribe or pueblo. If interested, please contact Arthur Blazer at (505) 476-3328.

These restrictions become effective at 8:00 a.m., Friday, March 17, 2006 and will remain in effect until rescinded.

DONE THIS ____ DAY _____, 2006

Arthur L. Blazer, State Forester
Forestry Division

Joanna Prukop, Secretary
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources
Department